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ABSTRACT

Through professional development schools (PDSs), the College of Education at Texas Tech University has attempted to link school and teacher education renewal with research. In 1990, the university and Lubbock Independent School District initiated PDSs at a junior high school and an elementary school. Three additional PDS sites have been initiated since then, including a rural K-12 school. In addition to discussing steps involved in initiating the professional development school collaborative, this paper describes several specific PDS initiatives. Considerable emphasis has been placed on staff development, which focuses on building the capacity of university- and school-based faculty for educational renewal. Each partner in the collaborative actively participates in planning research and inquiry designed to test ideas, practices, and innovations. At each PDS, a functioning cadre exists to promote the reflective practice, inquiry, and research that are seen as central functions of the PDS. Both process and outcomes data are being collected from individual PDSs, and a description of collection procedures and a list of the research studies underway are included. The university's PDS-related research efforts are linked to other collaboratives: West Texas State University, Wayland Baptist University, Lubbock Christian University, two regional service centers, and multiple school districts in the Panhandle-south Plains of Texas. (Contains 16 references.) (IAH)

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A Collaborative Agenda:

Linking School and Teacher Education Renewal with Research Through Professional Development Schools

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Previous efforts to restructure K-12 schools and teacher education programs have failed to change the deep structures in which they traditionally have been grounded (Cuban, 1986; 1990). Only recently have initiatives emerged that simultaneously link the restructuring of K-12 schools and colleges of education (Waloszyk & Davis, 1993). Efforts are underway across the country (in such institutions as Michigan State University, Brigham Young University, and the University of Washington) that illustrate the impact of school/university partnerships. This suggests that the future well-being of public schools and colleges of education may be integrally intertwined. In order to understand the process of collaborative change, university and school-based faculty must jointly re-examine how they can best carry out their respective responsibilities.

There has been extensive interaction between public schools and university faculties, but it has been almost exclusively interindividual not interinstitution. Only occasionally have university and school-based faculty members worked collaboratively to effect meaningful change in either schooling or teacher education (Goodlad, 1993). As a response, a number of school/university partnerships are being forged around the country to establish professional development schools as a means of bridging school renewal with the restructuring of the way that we prepare and continuously develop teachers, administrators, and counselors.

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The Holmes Group coined the term "professional development school" (PDS) in its first report, Tomorrow's Teachers (1986). The framers of the report deliberately avoided defining the operational structures of a PDS. They believed that such a definition should grow from extensive collaborative discussion between public school professionals, higher education personnel, and others interested in education reform. It was only through such dialogue could a new institution such as a PDS be negotiated, designed, and implemented.

PDSs are intended as places of change, demonstration, inquiry, and self-renewal. They are places in which many traditional and long-held views on the way schooling and learning to teach are "supposed to be" can be transformed (Neufeld, 1992). They constitute an effort to invent an institutional coalition that brings the requisite stakeholders together to simultaneously renew schools and colleges of education.

From the university perspective, a PDS is not representative of the typical school and university culture. While it is a site for teacher education, it is not representative of the typical research culture. As a new institution, it will develop its own culture distinctive from the traditions of schools, teacher education, or research universities (Goodlad, 1993). It is a school for the development of individuals who are preparing to enter the teaching profession, the development and continuous renewal of experienced teachers, and for research and inquiry for the improvement of the entire teaching profession (Holmes, 1990). It is also a school in which best practice is the hallmark and is continuously being tested and extended through reflection and inquiry.

Nonetheless, a dichotomy exists between theory and practice and between professors and practitioners (Soder, 1990) making conflict a possible outcome. The merging of schools

and universities can be an overwhelming task. The two educational realms could not be more different. The dissonance between these cultures make it difficult for university and school-based faculty to work together in productive, long-term, and useful ways (Goodlad, 1993). For some time these two parallel cultures have coexisted with neither fully appreciating the other.

The characteristics of colleges of education, schools, and classrooms require thoughtful and deliberate ways of thinking and acting. The image of the teacher as a lone practitioner working with groups of students or a professor working on an isolated basic research project must be altered to one of collegial teaching teams that transform inquiry into practice as a professional norm (Levine, 1992). Alternative paradigms, competing propositions, and multiple interpretations of reality must be considered. Teaching and learning can best be understood from a variety of orientations derived from research and accumulated wisdom of practice that has emerged during the careers of outstanding teachers (Reynolds, 1989). For teachers and teacher educators to improve their image and productivity, their preparation must be based on knowledge that is held in high regard and that informs practice (Cruickshank, 1990). It is in this context that PDS collaboratives are attempting to link school and teacher education renewal with research.

Initiating a Professional Development Schools Collaborative. Early in 1990, representatives of the College of Education at Texas Tech University held a series of meetings with key school district central office personnel concerning ways in which we could collaborate that would be mutually beneficial. Much of the early dialogue focused on the

need for school restructuring and the training and retraining that would be needed to prepare individuals to work successfully in restructured schools. It was concluded that the creation of one or more professional development schools could serve as a focal point for the collaborative process.

In the summer of 1990, the Lubbock Independent School District board of trustees approved the concept of professional development school and designated a junior high and an elementary school as professional development school sites. A staff development day prior to the beginning of the school was devoted to: (1) overviewing the goals of the Holmes Group; (2) establishing the need for schools to restructure; (3) confirming the need to better prepare preservice teachers and retrain practicing teachers; and (4) developing a process by which professional development schools might address each of these issues.

Shortly after the beginning of school, a professional development school discussion group began to meet to define the shape that the professional development schools would take. The public school administration and faculty wanted to move directly to specific staff development activities for which there were already identified needs. The university representatives were reluctant to initiate staff development before developing more fundamental assumptions concerning the purpose, goals, and outcomes expected.

After some initial tension, group members agreed that the discussions must become more concrete. Subcommittees were assigned specific tasks to define domains (areas of focus) and to develop an organizational structure to facilitate the functioning of the collaborative. By the spring of 1991, the group had worked through some very difficult

moments and had agreed in principle on a mission statement and the responsibilities of the constituent groups.

The outcome of more than a year and a half of such discussions and working groups led to the drafting and approval of a brief document describing our conception of a PDS collaborative. The mission statement provided the broad areas of concern that the collaborative would address. Specific domains were identified to focus the scope of the collaborative's efforts. Each domain was viewed as a broad area that should receive attention if the mission was to be achieved. The domains included: (1) School Restructuring, (2) Instructional Programs, (3) Preservice Preparation of Education Professionals, (4) Home and Family Services, (5) Staff Development, and (6) Research and Inquiry.

Each professional development school has organized a cadre (committee) for each domain. The individual cadres assume responsibility for issues related to the domain and report to the entire school faculty from time to time. A College of Education faculty member serves on each cadre. One university faculty member from each PDS serves on the Professional Development School Steering Committee of the College of Education.

The collaborative's organizational structure includes a Campus Improvement Team for each PDS, which has broad-based membership, including a university faculty member and a representative from the Region 17 Education Service Center. Its purpose is to identify and support those areas that have the potential to produce the most effective outcomes for all stakeholders. The collaborative's Operations Committee is concerned with activity coordination across professional development schools. A Steering Committee provides for

general oversight of the activities of the PDS collaborative and considers policy matters that promote its success.

Specific PDS Initiatives. During the past two years, much emphasis has been placed on building the capacity of university and school-based faculty for educational renewal. Individuals and groups of faculty members have participated in extensive staff development on the accelerated schools process, academic teaming, cooperative learning, thematic instructional units, curriculum redesign, whole-language and children's literature, elementary science methods, reflective practice, and the concept of teacher as researcher. Staff development has been accommodated by: delivering organized graduate courses at the school site, utilization of university and education service center personnel, and the engagement of external consultants.

A grant for $150,000 by the Sid W. Richardson Foundation has provided financial support for PDS travel, consultancies, and tuition for graduate courses. Funds were also made available to individual PDSs for site-specific staff development. In addition, the Lubbock Independent School District committed additional discretionary resources to each of the PDSs.

Three additional PDSs were initiated in the summer of 1992 which included an elementary school, a middle school, and a K-12 rural school located 27 mile from the campus. Five sites are now working toward becoming PDSs. The considerable activity that is occurring in the individual schools has had a "ripple effect" on non-PDS schools in the district. PDS faculty are being called on to assist non-PDS schools in initiating school renewal activities of their own. Similarly, the ripple effect has also affected university faculty

members, who are conducting research in PDSs, delivering field-based college courses, doing demonstration teaching, and the like.

To facilitate the college's involvement in the collaborative, a PDS coordinator and two PDS liaisons were appointed. Each has a load reduction of one course per semester. Their responsibilities include serving as resource persons, providing staff development, and communicating with the Curriculum and Instruction faculty and the College's key committees by such methods as participating in meetings and producing newsletters and bulletins.

The Accelerated School Model is being used as a basic framework to proceed with school renewal (Levin, 1987). A systematic process, which includes taking stock of the school community, developing a vision statement, setting priorities, and using an inquiry process to determine alternative courses of action is central to the accelerated schools process. The inquiry process allows the cadres for each domain to focus on specific problems, brainstorm about solutions, synthesize potential solutions, develop action plans, and evaluate and reassess their results.

Two years ago, under the leadership of Texas Tech University, the West Texas Teacher Education Collaborative (WTTEC) was organized for the purpose of improving teacher education in the West Texas region. Twelve public and private colleges of education are collaborating to create PDSs in their own communities. The Sid W. Richardson Foundation grant to Texas Tech University has been used to support the PDS initiative and to assist the collaborating institutions to develop their own PDSs. Texas Tech University has provided encouragement and staff development for teams of university and school-based faculty from collaborating institutions, which collectively are working with 24 PDS sites.

Each of Texas Tech University's preservice teacher education programs are in the process of being redesigned by committees whose composition is at least half public school personnel. Increasing numbers of education courses are field-based in PDSs. One of the most successful activities has been the placement of several counselor interns in each school to provide individual and group counseling services for students. Also, education leadership interns are assigned to work directly with PDS administrators. Twelve clinical faculty members will be employed in the fall of 1993 in conjunction with local school districts. They will have responsibilities for team teaching field-based courses, supervising interns, and assisting with school and college renewal.

Linking Renewal with Research. Texas Tech University's involvement in the establishment of PDSs is viewed as an opportunity to enhance the quality of its education personnel preparation programs through collaborative planning and delivery. As the partners move toward parity in carrying out their respective responsibilities, there will be increased opportunities to make connections between theory and practice. Each partner has a significant role to play as we plan, inquire, and test ideas, practices, and innovations. Simultaneous renewal of schools and colleges of education can best occur in an environment that draws from and builds on the knowledge, experiences, and reflections of the participating partners.

School/university partnerships such as PDSs also provide rich opportunities for research and inquiry. The Texas Tech University PDS collaborative is developing a foundation for a complex research agenda that is linked with other institutions and groups with a common agenda of extending their knowledge of school/university partnerships.

Progress of individual PDSs is being monitored through collecting both process and outcomes data. The intent is to conduct longitudinal studies over time on each of the PDS schools. It is important that students, teachers, and parent perceptions of school climate and change be monitored and attended to as the renewal process unfolds.

As the following examples demonstrate, data provides not only the basis for faculty research, but also evidence for particular evaluations. Baseline data collection includes school climate surveys of teachers, students, and parents. The results of these surveys have served as a basis for PDS faculty members to address specific needs of students. Individual school cadres have used teacher and student school climate responses to identify problems, discuss them, and take problem-solving action. Other baseline information collected includes data on student attendance and dropouts, faculty absences, and standardized achievement test scores. These data will be collected annually. Another survey of PDS school faculty members obtained their perceptions of the progress that their school was making toward becoming a PDS. Also, structured interviews were conducted with the principal and faculty members from each PDS. University professors who were most closely involved in the activities of the collaborative were also interviewed.

The PDS faculty survey and the qualitative analysis of the structured interviews were used by the dean of the College of Education and the college's PDS coordinator as a basis for two two-hour meetings with each PDS school principal. Problem areas were discussed and strategies for addressing each of the concerns were collaboratively developed and included future staff development needs and needed organizational changes.

A college environment survey was utilized to determine the faculty's perceptions of the college's climate for carrying out its mission. Data from the survey prompted the college administration to initiate staff development activities that focused on team building, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Following the staff development experience, a college-wide committee was elected by the faculty to develop a strategic long-range plan as a basis for the restructuring of the College of Education and its programs.

Faculty and doctoral students are increasingly collaborating with school-based faculty in the inquiry process. PDS faculty members have assisted in the planning and design of individual investigations and will present the research findings along with the university faculty at national, refereed meetings. This provides school-based faculty with an opportunity to better understand the relationship between theory and practice and to engage in action research specific to their own classrooms.

Data from research studies are shared with PDS faculty. The research findings of the study of middle school student concerns related to self-esteem were shared with the school counselor. Follow-up discussions resulted in the faculty developing specific plans to give more attention to building student self esteem. Also counseling interns assigned to the schools used the data to plan group counseling activities for students.

Each PDS school has a functioning cadre for research and inquiry. Its purpose is to promote reflective practice, inquiry, and research as a central function of the PDS. Formal and informal examination of current research is encouraged and supported. The research cadres have become more aware of the research that they need to conduct in their own

schools. In some instances, they have sought the assistance of university professors to help them frame their research questions.

The research cadre serves as a clearinghouse for all research conducted in an individual school. The research cadre also helps to support the work of other cadres that need to access research studies related to particular issues they are investigating as they use the accelerated school's inquiry process. The university faculty member who serves on the research and inquiry cadre and his or her graduate assistant coordinate library searches for each of the six cadres that need access to a specific body of research literature. Once a library search is completed, copies of the articles are placed in the school's faculty lounge where teachers can read and discuss the information with other members of their cadre.

University faculty members have been encouraged to become involved in the work of PDSs by linking their own research agendas with the research activities in the schools. A number of studies are underway or have been completed which address important research questions including the following:

- curriculum integration as it relates to academic teaming;
- middle school students' concerns related to self-esteem;
- introduction of whole language and its effects on teachers perceptions;
- introduction of the accelerated school process and its effect on the professional growth of teachers;
- examination of school/university collaboration, what schools and universities mean by collaboration, and how it is carried out;

- expectations and perceived barriers in the changing leadership roles of colleges of education and schools as they simultaneously restructure;
- differences in problem solving abilities of students who have had field based experiences and those who have not;
- the effects of hypermedia based instructional programs on the interaction between learner traits and several aspects of the software;
- the impact on learning variations in social context during collaborative hypermedia based instruction;
- the relationship between site based management and school renewal;
- a study of student written responses to literature; and
- an investigation of how children use narrative writing to learn science.

These studies are reflective of the range and complexity of the research activity that has been undertaken in PDSs.

Texas Tech University's research efforts are linked to four collaboratives that have related interest and purposes. The Texas Education Agency awarded Texas Tech University a competitive grant of $2,000,000 for first-year funding to establish a Center for Professional Development and Technology. Collaborating partners include West Texas State University, Wayland Baptist University, Lubbock Christian University, two regional education service centers, and multiple school districts in the Panhandle-south Plains of Texas. The purpose of the grant is to create field-based teacher education programs that are cooperatively developed and that place major emphasis on the integration of educational technology in teacher education and staff development programs. The grant includes provisions for developing and

operating an integrated regional communication system that (1) provides interactive communication among the partners (2) has interactive television capabilities for distance learning, and (3) permits sharing of resources among the institutions. The Center's Joint Quality Management Team are responsible for formative and summative needs assessment and evaluation of the components of technology, field based teacher education, and professional development. In short, research and evaluation are integral components of the center's activities and will involve both university and school-based faculty members.

The Texas Accelerated Schools Collaborative which is an outgrowth of the involvement of 14 Texas colleges of education in implementing the accelerated schools process is moving toward implementing a complex research agenda. Each institution has agreed to use common research instruments and to pool research findings. The collaborative will coordinate and approve studies related to the database. Subcommittees of the collaborative are developing indicator profiles on the accelerated schools process that will lead to multiple studies focusing on the accelerated schools process.

The 12 public and private colleges of education involved in the West Texas Teacher Education Collaborative will collect and share uniform data on the 24 PDSs in which they are collaborating. The collaborative will coordinate the data collection and analysis.

Another research collaborative, which includes Texas Tech University, Texas A&M University, and the University of Houston, is involved in a planned series of studies that focus on school/university partnerships (Knight, Wiseman, and Smith, 1992). An initial study compared processes and outcomes across each institution's partnership. A second study

focused on structured interviews with key partnership participants. A third study will be derived from the findings of the studies that have been completed.

Summary. School/university partnerships are built on intricate relationships that develop over time. They involve connections that are often fragile and heavily dependent on individual personalities. They are fraught with problems and short-term setbacks. Attaining parity among partners is a central theme to their success. There is much to be understood about how such organizations development and function.

PDSs hold potential for bringing together individuals and groups of university and school-based faculty who can test concepts and procedures that can lead to school and college of education renewal. Such collaborative relationships have a synergistic effect on all participants. Obvious benefits accrue to each of the partners as they attempt to better understand the renewal process. The interaction between the partners and the sharing of data and ideas increase their opportunities to improve practice and to frame new research questions.

PDSs present a tremendous challenge to those involved in their work. Yet, they offer us encouragement as a vehicle for renewal of the educational enterprise. Research and inquiry are fundamental to their success. The challenge is to build stronger collaborations with our partners and to sustain our efforts over time.

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